

Network



Tempe
Community
Council

TCC's Quarterly Community Newsletter



Children At Risk

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This TCC Special Report deals with recent information about the state of our children – nationally, in Arizona and locally. Much of the news isn't good.

In number of national indicator rankings, Arizona shows up at or near the bottom. For instance, the **Children's Rights Council** report, released in July 1999 shows Arizona as 47th among the 50 states.



For the *Children's Rights* report, 50 states and the District of Columbia were categorically measured and then ranked in relation to each other based on ten different criteria. The ten criteria used in 1999 were the following: 1) the percentage of children referred for investigation of alleged abuse and neglect, 2) the percentage of children not immunized by age two, 3) the high school dropout rate, 4) percentage of children living in poverty, 5) the child death rate, 6) the infant mortality rate, 7) the percentage of mothers not receiving prenatal care in the first trimester, 8) the percentage of juvenile arrests, 9) the percentage of divorces, and 10) the percentage of teen births. *The following table shows Arizona's percentages on each factor and overall.*

Children's Rights RISK FACTORS	1) Abuse/ Neglect	2) Unimmunized at Age 2	3) Drop-out Rate	4) Children in Poverty		5) Child Death Rate
ARIZONA	1.72%	26%	16%	26%		.03 %
Children's Rights RISK FACTORS	6) Infant Mortality Rate	7) Not Receiving Prenatal Care	8) Total Juvenile Crime	9) Divorce Rate	10) Teen Birth Rate	OVERALL % AT RISK
ARIZONA	0.76%	24.7%	1.64%	0.37%	7.39%	10.46%

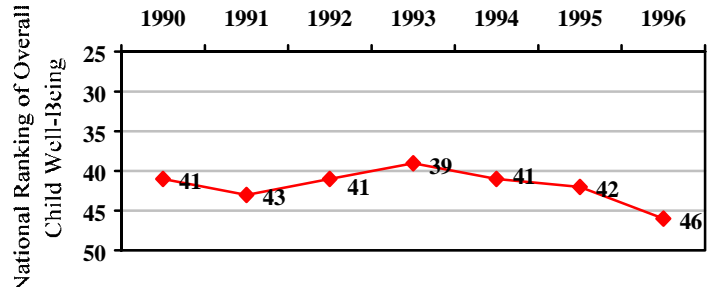
There were 1,150,186 children under age 18 in Arizona in 1996 - 10.46% of those children would equal **120,309** children. As the following table shows, *Arizona's rank in the Children's Rights study* has worsened in recent years.

Children's Rights STATE RANK	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995
ARIZONA	47	49	42	39	38

The 1999 Kids Count report paints a similarly gloomy picture. The report, which is published annually by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, shows Arizona has slipped to **46th** place among the 50 states for its overall ranking of Kids Count indicators of child well-being. As the chart on the right shows, Arizona's rank has also slipped in recent years to the current new low. Some child advocates feel there have been some improvement in recent years not yet reflected in these statistics (as of 1996).

Kids Count also has a number of indicators involved in its overall ranking – the table below shows Arizona trends since 1985 compared to the U.S. as a whole:

Arizona Kids Count Rankings - 1990-96



ARIZONA KIDS COUNT TREND DATA		Trend Data	
		1985	1996
Percent low birth-weight babies	AZ U.S.	6.2 6.8	6.7 7.4
Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	AZ U.S.	9.7 10.6	7.6 7.3
Child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-14)	AZ U.S.	40 34	32 26
Rate of teen deaths rate by accident, homicide, and suicide (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15-19)	AZ U.S.	85 63	84 62
Teen birth rate (births per 1,000 females ages 15-17)	AZ U.S.	39 31	49 34
Percent of teens who are high school dropouts (ages 16-19)	AZ U.S.	17 11	16 10
Percent of teens not attending school and not working (ages 16-19)	AZ U.S.	11 11	12 9
Percent of children living with parents who do not have full-time, year-round employment	AZ U.S.	32 33	32 30
Percent of children in poverty	AZ U.S.	21 21	26 20
Percent of families with children headed by a single parent	AZ U.S.	22 22	28 27

Kids Count also has a **“Family Risk Index”** where a combined set of characteristics is applied to determine how many children are “high risk”. The factors are: 1) child not living with two parents, 2) household head is high school dropout, 3) income below poverty, 4) parents are without steady, full-time work, 5) on welfare and 6) no health insurance. The resulting percent of **Arizona children considered living in “high risk families is 16% vs. 14% for the U.S. as a whole.** Sixteen percent of Arizona's children under age 18 would amount to some **184,030 Arizona children** living in “high risk”.



The Children's Defense Fund also maintains indicator data by state. The following table shows information on **Health and Disabilities**.

Children's Defense Fund Health and Disabilities Indicators	Arizona	United States
Incidence of early prenatal care, 1995	72.1% - State rank: 49	81.3%
Rate of low-birth weight births, 1995	6.8% - State rank: 19	7.3%
Infant mortality rate (infant deaths per 1,000 live births), 1995	7.5% - State rank: 25	7.6%
Percentage of 19- to 35-month-old children fully immunized, 1996	70% - State rank: 45	77%
Number & % of children through age 18 w/o health insurance, 1994-1996	281,000 - 22.4% - State rank: 49	11,300,000-5.1%
Number and percentage of children covered by Medicaid, FY 1996	454,952 - 33%	23,254,568 - 28%

Not all the above indicators are poor for Arizona. For instance, the *rate of low-birthweight babies* in the Children's Defense Fund chart is better than the U.S. as a whole – 6.8% with a ranking among the states of 19. Also, a higher proportion of children is covered by Medicaid (one third) in Arizona than for the U.S as a whole.

Child Deaths – The Arizona Child Fatality Review Team, created by a 1993 state law, found recently that there were **940 child deaths in Arizona in 1998**. Most of the deaths (65%) were related to “medical conditions/prematurity.” It also found that **305 of those deaths were preventable**, by such actions as buckling a seat belt, preventing violence to children, preventing unintentional injury and, improved handling of one-fifth of the medical situations.

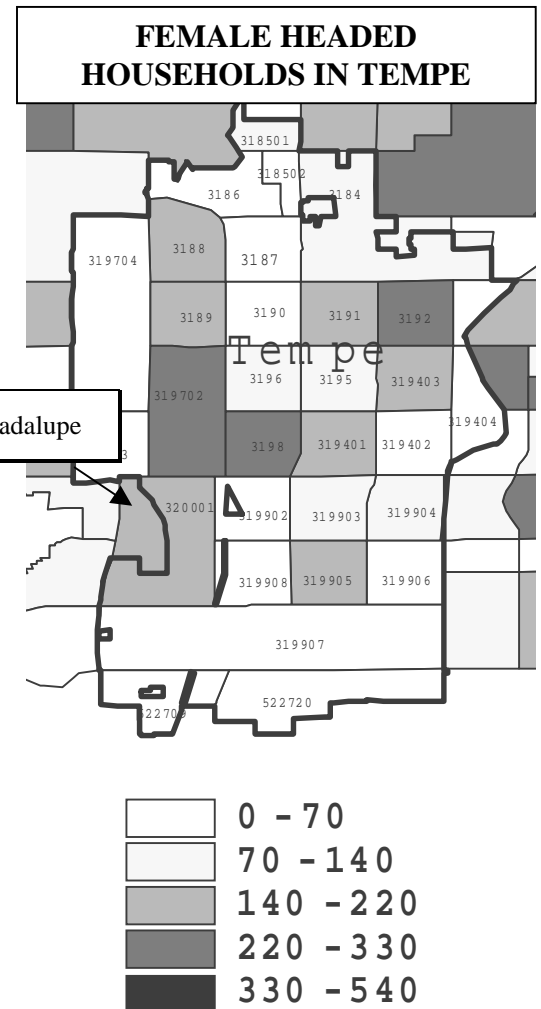
CHILDREN AT RISK IN TEMPE

According to the 1995 Census, there were **33,408 children in Tempe in 1995, 21.1% of the population**. This was a lower proportion than for Maricopa County, where 26.9% of the population were under age 18 in 1995.

One factor widely agreed to indicate risk is **single parent families** particularly those headed by females who generally tend to have lower incomes than males. The map to the right shows the incidence of female headed households in Tempe in 1996 using 1990 Census proportions. As shown, the lightest colored Census Tracts have 30 or fewer female-headed households and the darkest as many as 1,040. The Town of Guadalupe, as indicated, also has a higher proportion of female-headed households.

Free and reduced lunches – another indicator of children at-risk is the extent of children receiving free or reduced price lunches at schools, a benefit available only to low income families. The chart below shows the percentages for Tempe area elementary schools and also other East Valley districts (source: Maricopa County Superintendent of Schools).

School District	Enrollment	Grade Span	% Free & Reduced Lunch
Tempe Elementary	16,680	K-8	52%
Kyrene Elementary	19,423	K-8	9%
Higley	254	K-8	58%
Chandler	18,262	K-8	31%
Mesa	64,811	K-12	30%
Scottsdale	17,659	K-8	16%
Gilbert	16,680	K-8	8%



As the above table shows, over half of Tempe Elementary's students receive free or reduced lunches, one of the two highest in the East Valley, compared to 9% for Kyrene Elementary, one of the two lowest in the East Valley. Statewide, 52% of all school enrollment receive free and reduced lunches.

Domestic Violence – Children are at risk related to domestic violence situations in several ways:

Tempe Domestic Violence Crimes: 1997 vs. 1998			
Type of Crime	1997	1998	% Change
Child Abuse	22	31	41%
Custodial Interference	17	22	29%
Sex Offense - Child Victim	10	7	-30%

In 1998, there were **3,140** domestic violence related calls to Tempe Police, **315** of which involved minors present on the scene. There were *1,082 police reports* generated from those calls (34%) and *610 arrests* (19%). A number of studies indicate that children who experience domestic violence are more likely to repeat the pattern as adults.

Literacy is another important indicator of potential problems for youth. In the Tempe Elementary District, there are some **67 different languages** spoken by students who attend its schools. The district tracks those who are “Limited English Proficient” (LEP). In 1998, there were **2,590** such students in the district, **20.11%** of its 12,078 students. The schools with the largest percentages of LEP students were:

<u>School</u>	<u>% LEP</u>
Laird	46.24%
Scales	37.76%
Nevitt	30.74%
Hudson	31.93%
Frank	31.11%
Thew	30.61%

The lowest LEP schools were Fuller at 1.44% and Meyer at 4.66%. Tempe/Kyrene Communities in Schools has programs that help children stay in school at Scales, Thew, Frank and Laird schools.



Dropout Rates are quite often cited as another at-risk factor (mentioned in two of the national indicator studies, above). Following are the Tempe Union High School District dropout rates in 1999, shown by school (the overall Arizona dropout rate, grades 9-12, was 8.67% in 1999): (Source: AZ Education Dept.)

<u>Tempe Union High School District School</u>	<u>Dropout Rate – 1999</u>
Tempe High School	7.64%
McClintock High School	5.68%
Marcos de Niza	5.72%
Mountain Pointe	2.46%
Corona High School	1.91%
Desert Vista	0.64%
Compadre (alternative school)	New school – no data yet

Crime - referrals to the Juvenile Court are one of the most serious indicators of risk for young people, a risk that has already become manifest. Following are the 1998 referral figures for both the high school and the two elementary districts for Tempe, compared to the total referrals in Maricopa County.

REFERRALS TO JUVENILE COURT – 1998 (Source: Maricopa County Juvenile Court)									
	Violent	Grand Theft	Obstruction of Justice	Fight	Drugs	Public Peace	Petty Theft	Status (e.g., curfew)	Grand Total
TUHSD	39	141	152	70	151	137	229	366	1,285
TD3	22	66	28	56	18	65	108	112	475
KYRENE	6	16	7	14	12	9	37	34	135
TOTAL – 3 DISTRICTS	67	223	187	140	181	211	374	512	1,895
MAR. CO. TOTAL	1,754	4,905	3,377	2,687	3,063	3,542	6,925	11,476	37,729
Tempe Area%	4%	5%	6%	5%	6%	6%	5%	4%	5%

The offenses are counted by the area in which the person lived, so the alleged offense may or may not have occurred at the schools. The “%” line shows the proportion of the total number of referrals for the three Tempe area school districts to the total county referrals. In 1995, the City of Tempe’s population was 6% of the total county population. Since the three school districts take in a good deal more territory than Tempe, it can be said that the 5% “share” of the total court referrals of the three districts shown above is less than their proportion of the overall population. It can also be said that almost 1,900 annual referrals to the court still represent a most significant indicator of problems among our youth.



BOTTOM LINE

“The gods visit the sins of the fathers [and mothers] upon the children” -- Euripides

The above indicators tell us we need to do a much better job with our children. There are many programs such as Tempe/Kyrene Communities in Schools, working with often limited resources trying to make present life and future opportunity better for children in Tempe. Also, the **0-8 Community Task Force** was recently formed to work on increasing the “*protective factors*” in young children’s lives. Look for updates on this initiative in future issues of Network (and call Heather Glaeser at (480) 345-3758 if you would like more information on 0-8)